

Presbyterian Banner and
its battle

by
A. Ross

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To Mr. & Mrs. Campbell,

Co-fighters in the present battle.

With cordial greetings.

Anna Ross

The Presbyterian Banner and Its Battles

1556 - 1925

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11-5-29

BY

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STRASBOURG, SASK.



TORONTO
THE ARMAC PRESS LIMITED
66-68 DUNDAS STREET WEST

See page 18.

Shortt
BX
8932
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FOREWORD

THIS pamphlet is sent forth by the family of John Ross of Brucefield, who protested against the Union of 1875, and died protesting. It has been extracted from "The Man with the Book, or Memoirs of John Ross of Brucefield", with a very little alteration and addition. That chapter was written that the readers of the book might be able to understand his attitude toward the Union of 1875, and the reasons for that attitude. It has been felt that many of our Presbyterians of to-day need the same information that they may be able to understand their own attitude toward the Union of 1925, and the reasons for that attitude. So many of our young people especially, know nothing about the battles that have raged around our Presbyterian Banner during the past 400 years. It is to supply this information in short, clear form that this pamphlet is sent out.

Take notice, this is the Presbyterian Banner all through these centuries,—“Jesus Christ the sole Head of our Church”,—that is on the one side. “The Bible, the Word of our King, the only and infallible Guide of our Church”,—that is on the other side, and many and many a precious life has been laid down in its defence. Is it worth what it has cost? It is a great honour that we, in this Twentieth Century, are given to carry on the fight. “To us it is *given*, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

Though sent forth primarily for the Presbyterians, I would be glad that many of our dear fellow-Christians in the United Church should read this pamphlet. The information given here will, I hope, enable some of them to understand and respect our position.

Dear reader, if you think this information important, will you order some of these pamphlets, and place them where they will be read? I would be glad if you would do another thing. Please send the name and address of some friends to whom it might be well to send sample copies.

One copy, 8 cents; 4 copies, 25 cents; 20 copies, \$1.00, postage prepaid. Dollar orders should be sent to the publishers, "The Armac Press", 66 Dundas St. W., Toronto. Smaller orders may be sent to Mrs. Anna Ross, Strasbourg, Sask. These may be paid in postage stamps if more convenient.

THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER AND ITS BATTLES

THERE have been stirring events during the past two years, when men and women have had to squarely meet the question, "Shall we stick to the old Presbyterian Banner, or not?" It may help some of those who have stood firm, to have in their hand a brief history of the battles that have been fought round that Banner during the last four hundred years. Our young people especially should clearly see that the long series of Presbyterian battles, right from the time of John Knox to the Union of 1925, constitute one great conflict for the Crown Rights of Jesus Christ, and for the authority of the Word of God. These are the double banner our King has given His army to lead them in the fight.

The beginning of the "conflict" dates back to the year 1556, some years before the Reformation really took possession of Scotland, when Knox was labouring a few months in his native land. One knotty problem was perplexing Protestant consciences at the time in many a cottage and castle: "Is it lawful to attend the celebration of the Mass?" It was anxiously propounded to the great Reformer.

"It is nowise lawful in a Christian to present himself before that idol"; was the unhesitating answer.

There is the clear ring of spiritual loyalty in it. No compromising, no serving of two masters,—that is the important thing, that is the beginning of the "conflict." If there are not to be two masters in the Church of Scotland, who is to be her one master? "Jesus Christ Himself, as He speaks in His own word." That was the answer:—the King and the Word of the King.

"The King of England is the head of the Church," announced Henry the VIII, and arrogated to himself the title and the rights appertaining thereto. In distinct contrast with that, the Reformers of Scotland proclaimed from the beginning that Jesus Christ, and He alone, is the Head of the Reformed Church of Scotland, and that His word shall be their only guide. Neither were they empty protestations in the mouths of these men. In every item, they

watched and prayed and laboured to make the word of the King the rule of His Church. It was not the Queen that was consulted in arranging her worship and doctrine, nor the nobles, nor tradition, nor inclination. With the utmost prayerfulness and diligence they consulted Jesus Christ Himself, and out of His word they drew the constitution, doctrine, and worship of the Church of Scotland.

Kings and Queens and Acts of Parliament sometimes sanctioned, but oftener marred, the work of the Reformers. Still, through all opposition, through attempted bribery and real deceit and intrigue, the fixed purpose of the Church, acting through her General Assembly, was ever to keep for Jesus Christ, and for Him alone, the position of Head of the Church of Scotland. Surely this is most reasonable. If the Church is His body, and that is what Scripture asserts, He must be her Head, or there is marvellous monstrosity somewhere.

James I of England resorted to all the devices that cunning, linked with high-handed presumption, could contrive, that he might insert some subversive, man-made contrivances (bishops especially), among the simple and beautiful machinery of the Scottish Church. He was quite clear that, if he could once establish his bishops, they would soon gain power to control the clergy, and the clergy would guide the people, then he would have his own hand on the helm, and that was precisely what he wanted—not Jesus Christ, but King James, was to be Head of the Church of Scotland.

He was met by the prolonged and intense resistance of the very heart of the Scottish nation. It is thrilling to read the story of the struggle for example, in "McCrie's Life of Andrew Melville." "There were giants in the earth in those days."

In the end, by most unscrupulously thinning out the leaders, James partially accomplished his purpose. He effectually accomplished a purpose larger and far nobler than his own. He began to educate the Scottish people to understand the conflict between the two kings, each

claiming the right to rule the Church of Scotland. King James, or King Jesus, which should guide the consciences of Scotsmen? By his senseless and aggravating interferences, James taught Scotsmen to know their own position, and to prize it. No king but Christ Himself shall tell us how to regulate the affairs of His own house. Christ and He *alone* is the Head of the Church of Scotland.

Charles followed his father, and carried his mad interferences further still, till Jennie Geddes threw her stool at the Dean and the whole nation was stirred to its depths to say, "We will have no king over our kirk but Jesus Christ Himself. Then they bound themselves, as individuals and as a nation to stand by the simplicity and purity of the faith and discipline laid down by the Reformers. The world looked on in wonder to see noblemen and tradesmen, labourers and lairds, vieing with each other in signing the Solemn League and Covenant, in which each signer pledged himself and his all in support of the Crown Rights of the Redeemer.

Loyalty is a beautiful thing; it is a marvellously powerful principle. When Christianity develops as loyalty to Christ as King, it puts on its highest strength, and appears in its most beautiful garments. "Wholehearted loyalty to Jesus Christ is the highest type of Christianity."* It is the type that shall yet subdue the whole world to the Redeemer's sway. It is pre-eminently the type of Scottish religion in its best days. It was loyalty to Christ as King that devised the Covenant, and signed it, and stood to it—stood to it with an enthusiasm and obstinacy that few nations or individuals know how to combine. You often see enthusiasm, and oftener still obstinacy; but in combination they are rare.

And Charles had to yield and let them have their way. Charles had to abandon his purpose, but God accomplished His. He had given another and a deeper lesson to the Church and to the world—Christ, and He alone, must be the Head of the Church.

*John Ross of Brucefield.

Thirty years later, and another Stuart King sat on the throne of England. Charles the Second, light and flippant in every thing else, was strongly determined in this,—to reduce the Church of Scotland from its simple allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. Martyr blood flowed like water, and money was extorted by hundreds of thousands of pounds. Charles only partly accomplished his purpose, but again God accomplished His. The lesson this time had been so written out in letters of blood that it could never be forgotten,—Christ, and He alone, at any cost, must be Head of the Church of Scotland.

The world looked on and wondered, for most people could not understand why Scotsmen would rather die than attend the ministry of the curates. But they knew, though the world did not, that it was for the rights of Jesus Christ they were suffering. The spirit in which they met death in such a cause is seen in one who had fallen on the moor under his death wound. Rising for a moment from a pool of his own blood, he cried in a voice that has since echoed down the ages: "Though every hair on my head were a life, I would give them all for the Crown Rights of my Redeemer."

James the Second followed for a terrible three years, and then came the Revolution. No more royal interference. The Church of Scotland was legally established in her double right—her right to receive her maintenance from the Crown, and, along with that, her infinitely more precious right to take her laws as a Church only from Christ, her King and her Head, as she found them written out for her in His own Word.

Though legally free now in the possession of her rights, the Church of Scotland rose from the years of persecution in a terribly crippled condition for the exercise of them. The flower of her ministry were all swept away, perished among the 18,000 sufferers for the Crown Rights of Jesus Christ. Her pulpits were filled with half-hearted, or positively antagonistic men, and they, with their elders, must constitute her General Assembly, through which alone she could authoritatively act. There were no trained, godly

students, ready to step into the vacancies as they should occur. The outlook was dark, but the heart of the people was generally true, and steadily the Church worked up toward efficiency as the years went by. Patronage was abolished, so that each congregation, as it became vacant, was left free to choose its own pastor; and, to a considerable extent, men of the right stamp were chosen. Left thus in the simple exercise of their legal rights, the people of Scotland in one generation, would have filled the General Assembly with men as loyal to Jesus Christ as they were themselves.

For a few years this process went on. Then came the Union of England and Scotland in 1707. The established rights of the Church of Scotland were solemnly guaranteed to her by the articles of Union. But how was faith kept in this respect?

As Professor Gregg puts it in his short and valuable history: "In violation of these articles, an Act was rushed through the British Parliament in 1712 restoring patronage, and virtually placing the appointment of ministers in the hands of the Government, of noblemen, and other parties or persons who might have no sympathy with the Church. Against this invasion of its liberties and violation of national faith, the Church protested, but protested in vain.

"Bolingbroke, who introduced the bill, was a professed infidel. He did not pretend that, in transferring the right of choosing ministers from the God-fearing people to the godless Government and worldly nobility, he was at all seeking the advance of the cause of Christ. Everybody knew that the reintroduction of patronage was a direct violation of the articles of union to which the national faith had been pledged only five years before. But it put a vast amount of power into the hands of the new patrons, and the Scottish representation in the British Parliament was exceedingly small, so, with less opposition than should have been expected, the bill was rushed through and became law."

Bolingbroke accomplished his purpose. What was God's purpose? One thing was certainly accomplished—Christ's loyal people in Scotland passed through a time of testing far more severe than even the times of persecution. Pulpits were now chiefly filled by men of the world; and the people had no power to prevent it. The reign of "Moderatism" began, and the darkest cloud the Reformed Church of Scotland had known, settled down upon her. The Church as an Assembly soon ceased altogether to contend for the rights of Jesus Christ, and gave itself rather with right goodwill to censuring and hindering those whose hearts were set upon the advance of Christ's real kingdom.

During the early years of the century an old book, "The Marrow of Modern Divinity", was largely circulated in Scotland, and began to fill many corners of the land with the fragrance of the doctrines of grace. Now these doctrines were not in repute among the generation of worldly ministers forming the mass of the General Assembly in these days. Anything in the shape of a strong, living Christianity savoured too much of the old Covenanters, and was misunderstood and looked upon with a jealous eye. The book was brought up before the Ecclesiastical bar, was tried, found guilty, and condemned as a fanatical and dangerous production, and one that should be discountenanced in every possible way. Twelve of the most godly ministers of the Church appeared before the Assembly and strongly "represented" the real character of the book, and of the doctrines of grace therein taught, and urged the reversing of the sentence against it. After much vexatious opposition, the twelve Representers were dismissed from the bar of the Assembly with rebukes and admonition, and narrowly escaped deposition as favourers of dangerous doctrines.

In 1732 the Evangelical minority of the Assembly to the number of more than forty ministers, presented an address asking for a redress of grievances. They were supported by a petition signed by hundreds of elders and private Christians, earnestly asking action in the same direction. Both Ministers and laymen were refused even

a hearing, and the Assembly proceeded to act directly in the face of their requests. The decided opposition of the minority roused the Assembly to personal action against them, and four of the leaders, of whom Ebenezer Erskine was chief, were first suspended from the office of the ministry, and afterwards deposed. It was not now king or bishop or parliament that was fighting against the Crown Rights of Jesus Christ. It was the corrupted General Assembly herself. She pushed out of her midst the most valiant soldiers that were left, and then settled down to exactly a century of worldliness and stagnation.

The deposed men, separated from the Church of their fathers, protested that an unjust sentence could not exclude them from the office of the ministry, that they would still feed the flock of God as He might open doors for them. The four formed themselves in what they called the Associate Presbytery, and began at once to act as a properly constituted body.

Thus originated the Church of the Secession, which, during the dark century between 1733 and 1833 grew and multiplied, and held high the light of life among a "people that sat in darkness", till its ministers were numbered by hundreds, both in Scotland and England, and later in the Colonies and Mission fields as well. Much "gold, silver and precious stones" were built by these builders upon the one foundation, while "wood, hay and stubble" were the order of the day in the Mother Church.

They were a people who knew much about self-denial. Excluded from the Establishment, they had no means of support but the voluntary offerings of their attached, but often humble congregations, who had not been trained to support their ministers as we are now. This state of matters developed much self-denial on the part of both ministers and people. But self-denial is excellent Christian gymnastics, and the Secession thrived amazingly on it. That which at first was looked upon as a disability, was soon found to be a source of power, and like Paul, they learned to "glory in their infirmity that the power of Christ might rest upon them."

All this was right and proper. They found the voluntary method a good method. Very good. They found, as the years went on, and its effects upon all parties began to be tested, that the voluntary method is the best method. Better still. It was a grand discovery, and one for which the world should thank them. But they went further, and began to announce with more and more boldness that the voluntary method is the *only* right method for the support of Christ's cause. Had they rested in opinion, no serious harm might have been done. But the instinct of the Caledonian mind is to go deep down, past mere opinion, and find an everlasting principle at bottom—a principle which shall make the opinion not only right, but necessarily and exclusively right, and all opposers, not only wrong, but necessarily and radically wrong.

The principle they evolved to prove their position was a new view of Christ's mediatorial office and claims. Christ, they said, does most assuredly claim to be Head of the Church, but He does *not* claim to be Head of the *nations*. He certainly claims the allegiance of kings and magistrates *as individuals*, but He asks nothing from them as kings and magistrates but the honest performance of their duties towards their fellow-men, diligently securing to all classes and individuals their rights as members of society. Not only does a king or magistrate owe no official duty to Jesus Christ or His cause, he has no *right* to use the powers of his office to advance that cause. For a civil ruler to endow a church is wrong, and for a church to accept endowment is another wrong.

This was materially different from the teachings of the Reformers. They had stoutly maintained not only the Headship of Christ over the Church, but also the glorious Headship of Christ over the nations. They maintained in terms that gave no uncertain sound, that it is the bounden duty of the Christian ruler of a Christian nation to endow and sustain the Church of Christ within it, wherever the circumstances are such as to make such a step advisable, and yet a still higher duty for him to leave the Church absolutely free in matters spiritual. The Reformers taught

that "kings should be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers", to the Church whenever it needs such nursing. The Secession maintained that no such nursing was ever admissible at all.

This is what has been termed Voluntaryism. It holds high Christ's Kingship over the Church, but it robs Him of His Headship over the nations—robs Him, except in a modified sense, of a title which He surely claims, King of kings and Lord of lords.

There were several divisions and subdivisions, unions and reunions, among these Seceders, till at last they became, about the middle of the nineteenth century, the United Presbyterian Church, almost identical in doctrine and discipline with the Church of the Reformers, were it not for this one significant departure touching the Headship of Christ over the nations, or Voluntaryism.

Nearly a century passed away, and God seemed to have forgotten to be gracious to the poor, shackled Church of Scotland. But it was not so. His time was drawing near.

Thomas Chalmers, a young "moderate" minister, who cared more about winning distinction in mathematics than about winning souls to Christ, was brought in a very interesting way to know the Gospel as "the power of God unto salvation." He at once began to preach it, and two young men were led to Christ by that first sermon. Soon the voice that was stirring the dry bones in the little village of Kilmany was transferred to Edinburgh. The power that descended on the day of Pentecost was upon him, and life flowed from his lips and radiated from his pen. The genius of the man made way for the simplicity of the Gospel among the rich and cultured, and the simplicity of the man made way for him, and for it, into the hearts and homes of the very poorest. After that, first at St. Andrew's, and then in Edinburgh itself, he was called to the professor's chair. There, with the young men clustering about him in one long enthusiasm, he magnified Christ among them.

Another man of might was doing much the same work in the same spirit,—Dr. Andrew Thompson, of St. George's, Edinburgh.

Largely through the influence communicated by means of these two men, a spring-time visited the long forsaken Church of Scotland. Signs of life were everywhere. Whether God converted the "Moderate" ministers as He did young Chalmers, or converted the godless patrons so that they chose godly ministers, or so drew the young students to Himself that it became hard for the patrons to find a worldly one, I do not know. But the "Moderate" majority in the Assembly that had so long ruled for darkness and death began to find its numbers diminishing. The godly minority that, during the darkest days, had been lifting up a voice for the King, saw its numbers increasing. In 1833 the Evangelicals were in the majority, and could now manage the affairs of Christ's kingdom in His interest and under the guidance of His own Word.

But it is not wise to make too many changes at once. What should they seek first to set right?

One of the most grievous things during all these years of Moderatism had been the setting over congregations by the mere will of the patron, men nowise fitted for the office, and utterly distasteful to the people. The only thorough cure was to appeal to parliament, and get the unjust law of patronage repealed. Those who know anything of the difficulty of interfering with "vested rights" know something of the opposition and delay that might be looked for before anything could be gained from that quarter. How many years, or decades of years, would pass before the conscience of the British Parliament would be moved—who could tell?

Could anything be done in the meantime in the way of mitigating the evil? They could not, till the law was changed, interfere with the right of the patron to choose and present the minister. But they could empower the Christian people, by a sufficient majority, to decline the minister presented, leaving it still to the patron to choose another.

A law putting this power into the hands of the Christian people was passed by the General Assembly of 1834. It was called the Veto Act, because, though it could not give

the people the power of choice in the matter of their minister, it gave them, in certain circumstances, the power to veto the choice of the patron.

Professor Gregg gives the following account of the noted case of Auchterarde.

"A few months after the passage of the Veto Act, the parish of Auchterarder became vacant, and the Earl of Kinnoull, who was the Patron of the parish, nominated Mr. Young to the charge. A call to Mr. Young was prepared to be signed by the parishioners, but only three persons, one of whom was the patron's factor, and a non-resident, signed it.

"On the other hand, out of 350 male heads of families who were members of the congregation, 287 *appeared before the Presbytery* and recorded their opposition to the settlement of Mr. Young. The Presbytery refused to sustain the call, and their refusal was sustained by the superior courts, the Synod and the General Assembly. Regarding themselves as robbed of their rights, the patron and his nominee appealed to the judges of the Court of Session, who, by a majority of eight to five, decided that the Presbytery had acted in violation of the law of the land, and particularly of the Act of 1712.

"Mr. Young now demanded that the Presbytery should proceed to settle him over the people that had so unanimously declined his services. The case came before the Assembly, which decided that, though the courts had a right to deal with the stipend and the church property as they deemed fit, they had neither right nor power to require the Church to settle an unsuitable minister over an unwilling people. Let them give Mr. Young the salary and the manse if they chose. He could not occupy the pulpit or take the position of minister of the parish. They also empowered the Presbytery to appeal from the Court of Session to the House of Lords. But their appeal was dismissed by the House of Lords, and the finding of the Court of Session was declared to be law. Mr. Young now enjoyed the stipend, but he was not content. He claimed that he must be settled over the parish as its minister. This the Pres-

bytery refused to do, and the case was again carried before the Court of Session. The Court again decided against the Church, and required the Presbytery to proceed at once with the settlement of Mr. Young, prohibiting at the same time the placing of any other minister over the parish, even though he should be sustained by the voluntary offerings of the people."

Thus the old Church of Scotland, awakened out of her long lethargy, "putting on her strength, shaking herself from the dust," and going to do her King's work in the King's name, was met by the Court of Session and told to do exactly what, as the handmaid of Jesus Christ, she knew she ought not to do, and forbidden to do the very thing her real King required her to do. It was the old issue up again, who is the head of the Church of Scotland?

Case after case arose all through those years of conflict, and the eyes of the civilized world looked on with the deepest interest.

Then came the final action of the House of Lords in rejecting the Claim of Rights. This rejection left nothing to the contending ministers but either meekly to obey the civil ruler to the neglect of the claims of Christ, or still hold up the rights of Christ and step out of the Established Church.

The answer of the Government was received in January, 1843. The Assembly met on the 18th of May. What would the result be then? How many of the ministers would prove true to their principles? How many of them, for conscience sake, would leave the Establishment—churches and manse and all—that they might be free to obey Christ, and Christ *alone*, in all matters spiritual?

"I venture to assert, from pretty accurate information" said Dr. Cumming, of London, "that less than one hundred will cover the whole secession,—but I am not satisfied that any will secede."

"Mark my words", wrote one of the best-informed and most sagacious citizens of Edinburgh, "Mark my words, not forty of them will go out."

"The day of trial at last arrived.—So early in the morning as between four and five o'clock the doors of the church

in which the Assembly was to convene, opened to admit those who hastened to take up the most favourable positions, in which they were content to remain nine weary hours.

"Then the hour of trial came. After the solemn opening prayer, Dr. Welch, the retiring Moderator, rose and read a Protest, closing with the words: 'This our enforced separation from an Establishment which we loved and prized, through interference with conscience, the dishonour done to Christ's Crown, and the rejection of His sole and supreme authority as King in His Church.' Having finished the reading of this Protest, Dr. Welch laid it upon the table, turned and bowed respectfully to the Commissioner, left the chair, and proceeded along the aisle to the door of the church. Dr. Chalmers had been standing immediately on his left. He looked vacant and abstracted while the Protest was being read; but Dr. Welch's movement awakened him from his reverie. Seizing eagerly upon his hat, he hurried after him with all the air of one impatient to be gone. Mr. Campbell (of Menzie), Dr. Gordon, Dr. Macdonald and Dr. Maefarlane followed him. The effect upon the audience was overwhelming. At first a cheer burst from the galleries, but it was almost instantly and spontaneously restrained. It was felt by all to be an expression of feeling unsuited to the occasion; it was checked in many cases, by an emotion too deep for any other utterance than the fall of sad and silent tears. The whole audience was now standing, gazing in stillness upon the scene. Man after man, row after row, moved on along the aisle, till the benches on the left, usually so crowded, showed scarce an occupant. More than 400 ministers, and a still larger number of elders, had withdrawn."

So the old Church of Scotland was torn in two. So the Free Church was born. With which part was the Banner? Was it with those who were content to accept the ruling of the Civil Courts as to the duties of the Church of Christ? or with those who had left all that they might be free to yield obedience to Christ as their King?

When the news of the Disruption had come to Canadian shores by the slow progress of the sailing vessel, the meeting

of the Synod, which was to take place in July, was close at hand. That Synod, with the news of the noble conduct of the Free Church brethren warm in their hearts, sent them stirring messages of sympathy and approval. This they had done throughout the struggle encouraging the Mother Church to maintain the conflict at any cost.

Was there any need for a Disruption in Canada? None took place in Nova Scotia. How did they avoid it?

The designation of the Synod there was: The Synod of Nova Scotia *in connection with the Church of Scotland*. At its meeting in 1844 it resolved, almost unanimously, to drop the clause: *in connection with the Church of Scotland*, and the connection which it declared, and to substitute another, so that the name should read: The Synod of Nova Scotia, *adhering to the Westminster Standards*. In this way the Synod of Nova Scotia stood distinctly on its own feet, and the controversy scarcely touched them.

The circumstances of the Canadian Church were essentially the same, and could have been met in the same way. The Evangelical party, at the meeting of Synod in 1844, were earnestly desirous that this course should be pursued. But the majority during the year had changed its mind. The very body that, during the struggle, had repeatedly encouraged the Evangelical party in Scotland to maintain the conflict at all costs, decided by a majority of fifty-six to forty, to keep connection with what was left of the Church of Scotland, and to retain in its name the clause which declared that connection.

Those in sympathy with the Free Church felt that, in retaining that name and the connection it declared, they were sanctioning the action of the Church of Scotland in refusing to lift up a clear testimony as to the Headship of Christ over the Church, and virtually receding from the solemn declaration already given to the great principle for which the Free Church party had been contending.

On the 10th of July, the day after the vote was taken, the minority entered their dissent to the action of the Synod, and withdrew to a separate building, to constitute themselves into the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Thus the Free Church of Canada was born.

It looks easy on paper, but the Disruption in Canada, as to self-denial, meant much the same as it did in Scotland. The ministers who, for conscience sake, signed that Dissent, and withdrew from the Synod in connection with the Church of Scotland, knew that they thereby risked their churches, manse and salaries. Some of them were required, in very grievous circumstances, to yield all up, though some, through the unanimous adherence of their congregations, were spared that trial. But their new college, Queen's College of Kingston, in behalf of which some of these men had laboured hard and denied themselves much, had to be given up, and all interest in Government endowments was lost.

But they gained more than they lost. They gained the Banner. They gained the right to keep, in the forefront of their testimony, the glorious fact of the Headship of Christ over His own Church. Alongside of that, in shining letters, they put the twin truth, the Headship of our Lord Jesus Christ over the nations; for they would not have it understood that, though looking now to the voluntary offerings of their people for support, they were, on that account, going to accept the principles of Voluntaryism. And thus, poor in this world's goods, but glorying in their King, they set their faces to the work. And did not the King smile upon them, and bless them, and signally use them! For many years there were tokens of His prospering hand, that made glad the hearts of those who had borne loss for His sake.

Was it without a providential purpose that God caused a lesson on the Headship of Christ to be thus written deep in the early history of the Presbyterian Church in Canada? There is an impression abroad that the whole matter is a "dead issue" now; but the historian of the struggles culminating in the *Millennial* victory may take a different view.

Four more paragraphs are needed to bring the story down to 1925.

For 17 years the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church all over Canada worked side by side in great

brotherliness. A strong desire grew up among them to become one. In 1861 the Union was consummated and the Canada Presbyterian Church came into being. What had to be sacrificed in order to this Union? The doctrine of the Headship of Jesus Christ over the nations. The doctrine was affirmed in the Basis of Union, but so mildly or ambiguously that those who did not believe in it took no offence. Rev. Lachlan McPherson of East Williams and his congregation, protested, and for years stood out, also some godly groups, especially in the townships of Kinloss and Kincardine. The Lord must have some witnesses at every false step.

For 14 years the Canada Presbyterian Church seemed to grow and prosper: but there was something dying amongst them, though they did not know it. A Union now was under way with those Presbyterians who had adhered to the connection with the Church of Scotland at the time of the Disruption. What must be dropped this time? The glowing testimony which both the Churches already united had borne to the Headship of Jesus Christ over His own Church,—that must be lowered in order not to give offence to those who had adhered to the Old Kirk. This was done in order to the Union of 1875. Jesus Christ, and He alone, the Head of the Church, the old standard, maintaining which so many had suffered martyrdom in Scotland, and so many had suffered loss during the Nineteenth Century—that was lowered in order to the Union of 1875. Rev. Lachlan McPherson and his congregation, Rev. John Ross of Brucefield and his congregation, protested and died protesting. Several other ministers without charges stood loyally with them. The North groups of godly men welcomed and stood with them. God must have some witnesses when a false step is taken.

The King was down, but the word of the King, the word of God, was still held to be the infallible guide of the Church. It was still held to be the living word of a living God. But soon the tide of Modernism swept into the Presbyterian Colleges, and then, of course, out into the pulpits. It could have been easily and quickly checked at the be-

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ginning. But no man among them had the God-given courage to *speak out*, and let the people know what was being taught their precious boys when they gave themselves to be ministers of Christ. What was the matter? Many of these truly godly ministers mourned over what was going on, but they did not *speak out*. The King had been dishonored, and *He did not call one of them to His foot* to do the work, and they were dumb, and the whole Church has been honey-combed with disbelief in the divine authority of the Bible, and of the essential Divinity of our Lord.

How different the history of the Irish Presbyterian Church. Arianism and Socinianism had begun to spread alarmingly among them. But the call of the King came to Dr. Henry Cook, and he was given wisdom and courage to cleanse the Church. Under his leadership, the church disbanded, ceased to be a Church, and then re-organized, taking in only the ministers who loyally adhered to the Essential Divinity of Jesus Christ. It was a testing time, but it was a sealing time. These men were sealed with the seal of the living God, and that sealing has endured for more than 100 years. Their children's children, and theirs again, are now with us, and are among the strongest and most intelligent of those who are rallying round the standard of the King of the Church. But in the Presbyterian Church in Canada the Union had been preferred to the old glowing testimony of loyalty, and the King did *not* give the call to one of these good men that would have made them valiant and victorious for the truth of God.

Now comes the Union of 1925. What has been given up this time? The King as the Head of the Church was given up before, but now the Word of the King as the Guide of the Church—*that* is gone altogether. Presbyterians, take notice. All that the United Church declares officially is, not that the Bible is the Word of God, but that it *contains* the word of God. Who is to decide for that Church which parts of the Bible are the Word of God, and which are not? That is left to the opinions of men. So that the opinions of men are the only guide of the United Church as a Church. Thank God, there are many dear

believers in that Church who still hold to every jot and tittle of the Bible. But the United Church has dropped the old Banner that led all the Presbyterian battles of the past 400 years, and led to victory every time.

Thanks be unto God for giving us now, as Continuing Presbyterians, the opportunity again to rally round the old standard—even Christ our Divine King and the Bible His unerring Word. But if we would be strong, we must be intelligent, and know our own history, and what it means.

THOUGHTS FOR THE PRESENT TIME

AN OLD HYMN RE-CAST

On Good Friday, 1920, I was at a Missionary Dinner Party at Taihoku, Formosa. After dinner we had family worship together, and it being Good Friday, naturally the hymn was sung, "When I survey the wondrous cross."

While singing, Andrew Murray's words came strongly to mind:—"When we pray, let us expect an answer according to the value of the blood of Christ *in His Father's sight*." He added, "If we look for an answer according to the value of that blood in our own sight, we could not look for small things. But if we expect according to its value in His Father's sight, *what* may we not expect?"

That thought filled me, and quickly the first two lines took this shape:

When God surveys the wondrous cross
On which His own Beloved died.

I lay awake most of that night, and by morning the old hymn had taken the following shape:

When God surveys the wondrous cross
On which His Own Beloved died,
His richest stores of heavenly grace,
To sinners all He opens wide.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God.
Th' inheritance of peace and power
Are mine own portion through His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.
God freely gave His Son to death,—
What will He do that death to crown?

The whole wide universe is His,
But that were riches far too small.
In answer to the death of Christ,
God gives Himself, His word, His all.

This has been a very precious thought. It has been a
“key” thought ever since.

ANOTHER OLD HYMN RE-CAST

“My thoughts are not your thoughts. As the heavens
are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts higher than
your thoughts, saith the Lord.”

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

In a time of great perplexity and difficulty involving
others besides myself, the old hymn took a somewhat dif-
ferent shape. In its new shape it fully met my need.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than God's infinite promises.
I do not ask for signs of flame,
But lean upon Jehovah's name.
On God's own covenant word I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

In later years it has taken on a different shape still:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than God Himself, the Holy Ghost.
The Holy One of Israel,
He is my hope, He is my boast.
Joint-heir with Christ, I drink this wine,
All power in heaven and earth is Thine.
Problems that baffle human skill,
Darkness that yields no ray of light,
Evils that laugh at human laws,
Chaos that mocks at mortal might,—
All these must yield to force Divine,
All power in heaven and earth is Thine.

Forth in Thy name, O Lord I go,
Strong in this sharp two-edged sword:—
"To save by many or by few,
Sure it is nothing with the Lord."
Joint-heir with Christ, I drink this wine,
All power in heaven and earth is *mine*.

Not mine certainly for the doing of any work I may happen to map out for myself, but assuredly mine for any work to which He calls me, whether I apprehend these "unsearchable riches" or not.

Let me illustrate,—When God sent Moses into Egypt to bring Israel out from under Pharaoh, "all power in heaven and earth" was his for the doing of it. And how he wobbled until he got hold of that truth.

When the Lord commissioned Gideon to "smite the Midianites as one man," "all power in heaven and earth" was at his back for the task. He, too, wobbled until his heart was opened to take in that fact.

When young George Mackay was on his way to Formosa, his heart sank under his own helplessness. But he quickly anchored on the "all power in heaven and earth." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and his life battle was one continuous succession of victories.

One afternoon I asked him:—"Don't you *ever* get discouraged?" Quick and decided he answered, "No, never." This surprised me, and I said, "Dr. Mackay, that secret must not die with you. How do you account for that?" In a different tone, a tone Moses might have used in presence of the burning bush, he answered, "Because Jesus Christ my Lord is God the Creator, and because God means every word He says." He was triumphantly following the old Presbyterian Banner,—The King on one side, and The Word on the other.

THE POWER OF THE PRAYER MEETING

WHEN God's people wake up, and begin in earnest to wield the power of the Prayer Meeting, it is the writer's conviction that Higher Criticism and Unitarianism shall melt and disappear like snowflakes under the summer sun.

This leads to the question, What is a real, Bible Prayer Meeting?

There are seven samples given in the word of God: these will certainly reveal the essential features. Let me give the list:—

1. Noah's family worship with the "sweet savour" of his elaborate sacrifice.

2. Moses, Aaron and Hur on the hill-top, with the uplifted rod standing for the uplifted Christ.

3. Jehoshaphat and, representatively, all Judah, standing before the Temple, pleading against the three armies coming down upon them. This is, perhaps, the largest Prayer Meeting on record. II Chron. 20.

4. Daniel and his three friends asking for the "king's secret." Daniel's windows, "open toward Jerusalem," were not closed that night.

5. The 120 in the "upper room," praying and praising for the promised Power, in the very presence of the cross on which their Lord had "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

6. The Apostles, in view of the thunders of coming persecution, praying, "Grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching out thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy Holy Child Jesus."

7. The whole Jerusalem Church by prayer, snatching Peter out of the hand of Herod.

In each of these Prayer Meetings there are four distinct features, in some of them five:—

1. All of them were convened for the express purpose of laying a special petition before God upon which all present were "agreed."

2. The request was in every case laid before God with the definite *purpose* to secure an answer. Purpose is a stronger word than expectation, and I think expresses the truth better.

3. The blood and the priesthood of Jesus Christ was, in every case, the prevailing power of the prayer.

4. An abundant answer.

When we see these four features present in each of these meetings, may we not conclude that they are the essential features of a real Prayer Meeting?—that a meeting which lacks any one of them is not a Prayer Meeting at all. What about a gathering that lacks three of these features, and some times all four?

The fifth feature present in some of these sample meetings is a definite promise from God to give the very thing they are requesting. This is distinctly the case with Nos. 3 and 5. With such a promise there can be the positive assurance that the thing asked for is according to the will of God, "for God never promises what is against his will." Then see the "confidence." I John 5:14, 15.

Will those interested in this most vital subject seriously study these sample meetings given us in the word of God, and see if the features given above are not present in every one of them.

When God's people wake up and begin in earnest to *wield* the power of the Prayer Meeting, then Higher Criticism and Unitarianism shall quickly melt and disappear like snowflakes under the summer sun.

"The saints of the Most High shall *take* the kingdom."

During the past 17 years, a few groups both in Saskatchewan and in California have been testing the power of the Prayer Meeting in connection with the weather and the crops, and we are learning precious things concerning the power of united prayer over the winds and clouds, and the rain for the thirsty ground.

Anyone wishing to know details of these 17 years can get them from a 32 page pamphlet published by the Moody Colportage Association, 826 La Salle St. N., Chicago. The title of the pamphlet is, "Prayer a Neglected Weapon." Single copies, 10 cts., 12 copies for \$1.00.

THE SEVEN GREAT REVIVALS FORETOLD IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Four of them have already appeared, each at its appointed time and with its appointed characteristics. Two, Nos. 5 and 6, are due during this present century, and the Millennium is the seventh.

Let us briefly touch upon the four already fulfilled.

Ephesus, the Church of the First Century, was on the wane in John's day. She sorely needed a revival, and she got it. During the second and third centuries, ten times the great Roman Empire set to work to stamp out the name of Jesus Christ in the blood of His followers. It was sharp medicine the Lord gave to His sick Church, but a Symrna revival was the result. The Lord looked on her and said, "but thou art rich." The world looked on her and said, "Behold how these Christians love one another." This is Revival No. 1.

Pergamos is the Church of the fifth and sixth Centuries, the Church in prosperity, "dwelling where Satan's seat is," the state Church of the great Roman Empire. But Pergamos so seated went down in her doctrine and worship and spirituality with awful rapidity. She surely needed a revival the very worst way. But she did *not* get it. She became the Great Apostasy, and has continued to be ever since. But to the *overcomers* in Pergamos were given the rich promises of the "hidden manna" and the "white stone." These promises were fulfilled to them, and the great spiritual and missionary revivals of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries were the result, indicated by the sealing of the 144,000 between the Seals and the Trumpets. The world of to-day has almost forgotten these wonderful revivals, but God's eye was upon them for His hand wrought them. The result was a true Church within the false Church, *sealed* with a sealing that held all through the Dark Ages. This work of grace in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries—this is Revival No. 2.

The Great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, wrought by the Angel of the Covenant coming down from

heaven with the "little book open" in his hand—this is Revival No. 3.

The Church of the Nineteenth Century, the Church of Philadelphia, with its "little strength" and its missionary "open door," which the Lord Himself set before her, and which no man to this day has been able to shut—this is Revival No. 4.

As these four Revivals have appeared at their appointed times and with their appointed characteristics, so surely shall Nos. 5 and 6 appear at their right time, this present Seventh Vial period, and with their appointed characteristics.

What are the appointed characteristics of Revival No. 5?—the Revival in its beginnings now due.

It is to be felt to the utmost corners of the Church of Rome. The fall of the Great Apostasy is to precede the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. But before her fall the godly throughout her communion are to hear God's voice saying to them, "Come out of her, my people," and they will come out. What divinely brief and pregnant expressions! Can it mean anything short of a New Reformation, and a new Exodus of Protestantism? It is the "coming out" of a prepared people at the call of a Voice they have already learned to know. Let the Christian imagination take hold of these statements and work out what sort of a Revival we may expect throughout the Church of Rome.

What more have we about it?

When the Marriage of the Lamb is announced it is stated that "His wife hath made herself ready." From this word it is clear that, before the marriage there is a period of time during which the Bride is awakened to see that she is *not* ready, and during which she is enabled seriously to set herself to the work of "making herself ready." The results of this in the Bride herself are beautifully put. "To her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." Notice, it is not said, "The fine linen is the righteousness of Christ." *That* belongs to the feeblest believer with the first breath of faith.

This is the "righteousness of the saints,"—character, conformity to the image of the Son, the in-wrought likeness to Jesus Christ, the "robes with needle wrought" in which the Bride is presented to the King in Psalm 45. She has been taught to take hold of the crowning promise of the New Covenant, "I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts." These promises have been fulfilled in her, and she is ready for the marriage oneness with her Lord.

Let the Christian imagination take hold of this statement, and work out what sort of a Revival this No. 5 is going to be.

How is this great preparatory Revival going to be wrought? I would be weak talking of these things if I could not lay my finger on the word that sheds light on these two questions—How? and By whom?

Fifty years ago, John Ross of Brucefield, was quietly studying Matt. 17, and its account of the Transfiguration. He heard the Father's voice from heaven: "This is my Beloved Son, *hear ye Him*," and he went on with the chapter, listening, watchfully listening, to every word his Lord might speak. He heard the disciples' question, "Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?" and he heard the Master's answer, and he *listened* to it, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things."

John Ross had never *listened* to that word before. But now he listened and looked at it. "Elias shall come"—that was not John. His work was in the past. "Elias shall restore all things." There was complete success in that word—that was not John. His work nationally had been a failure. Then there was that word "truly," our Lord's own word "verily," giving divine emphasis to both statements. So, listening to God's "Beloved Son," John Ross leaped to the conclusion, "Before Christ's Second Coming there shall be an all-conquering Elias, who shall do the work perfectly which Elijah failed to do, and which John the Baptist did but feebly and imperfectly."

When, years afterward, he told me of this, it sank deep into my heart, and it has been ever since a star of hope for the dark times evidently ahead.

I often used to wonder what would be the manner of the Elias sent this time? Would he be one man filled with the spirit and power of Elijah, as in the case of John the Baptist? Or would he this time be an army of such men? Perhaps 300? I strongly leaned to the 300.

But one day, amidst California canyons, I was studying Isa. 40: 1-8. I recognized it as I went along as an Elias strain. John makes that plain in saying: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." Then came the glorious six promises that follow: "*Every* valley shall be exalted, and *every* mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." In these six promises I saw the scope and completeness of the Elias work foretold here, and in token of its sure fulfillment I had the words, "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

As I mused on these things, an Elias loomed up before me in whose presence my 300 John the Baptists became almost an army of pigmies. The Third Person of the Trinity, the Spirit of God who at the beginning "moved upon the face of the waters," and who "measures these waters in the hollow of His hand," He is the hero of Isa. 40, and *He* is the Elias who is to prepare the Bride for her Lord, and so to reveal to her His glory that "all flesh shall see it together." My heart has been at rest on the subject ever since. He and He alone, is able to do this work, and launch Revival No. 5 so that Rome shall be destroyed and Christ's Bride shall be stirred up to "make herself ready."

Elijah was forerunner to Elisha, John the Baptist was forerunner to the Christ of the humiliation, and the Holy One of Israel in the fulness of Pentecostal power, is forerunner to the Christ of the Second Coming. Many a time I have felt like shouting the good news. See Isa. 40:9-11. Only I changed the words "shall come" to "has come," for the time is ripe, and I know that He, as the great Elias, is at work already.

I have been teaching the children that dear old hymn, "Hold the fort for I am coming." There is ringing good cheer in it. But I became conscious that it did not satisfy me. The word that fills me with courage is the nearer message, "Hold the fort for the Holy Ghost is coming," is even now here in His Elias power. I tried to re-cast the hymn so as to say what I wanted said, but it would not re-cast. Then it flashed upon me: "Isa. 35:3-7, rings out exactly what I want. I will re-cast that into a song," and here it is. Many a time I sing it out myself with joy of heart.

Feeble toilers in earth's deserts, hear the word I bring,
Weary runners on God's race-course, lift your heads and sing.

Disappointed? fearful-hearted? let your hands be strong;
Reinforcements now are with us: right shall conquer wrong.

For our God has come with vengeance, slumbering power
no more:

He will break the proud oppressor, save the suffering poor.
He has brought reward and victory to His toiling few.
We are now His real co-partners making this world new.

But His partners must have vision—He will touch our eyes.
And His partners must have hearing that we hear His voice.
Then shall knees but now so feeble leap at His command:
Then shall tongues that now but stammer sing from land
to land.

Then shall waters from the Fountain break from Zion Hill,
And with life and heavenly blossoms earth's parched places
fill.

Then shall dragons' lurking—places scatter death no more,
For Zion's King through Zion's men shall rule from shore
to shore.

This is Revival No. 5, the great preparatory work that is to quicken all godly souls to "come out" of the Church of Rome, and to prepare the Bride of Christ wherever found for the coming of the Bridegroom.



Revival No. 6—that is the Marriage of the Lamb.

What does this mean? Here I would tread softly.

It means this at least—the fulfilment to those who are ready of the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

It means actual *oneness*. It means the fulfilment in them of our Lord's great intercessory prayer "That they may be one even as we are one: I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one. that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved me."

With many of God's choicest saints, the Marriage of the Lamb means the Rapture of the Bride out of earth into heaven. These two verses just quoted from John 17, tell dead against that view. The world needs her. It is through them that the world is at last to be made to believe and know that Jesus Christ is God's accredited Messenger. The Rapture would rob the world of this. Christ's other word in John 17 surely applies too, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

The glory and the power that are wrapped up in it only God yet knows, but the Marriage of the Lamb is Revival No. 6.

The Millennium itself is Revival No. 7.

THE COMING REVIVAL

For nearly thirty years I have been praying for a world-wide Revival. It was to be "*a Revival after God's own pattern, and wrought manifestly by God's own power.*"

When the Welsh Revival came, I clapped my hands and cried, "This is my Revival." And so it was. But it did not become world-wide because there were not then world-wide highways along which it could travel.

But God has been at work since that day, and the "highways" are now, I hope, and I think, nearly ready.

The Revival prayed for has in the meantime developed. It has four features instead of merely two, and it now has a climax. Here are the four features:

1. It is to be one after God's own pattern. See Isaiah 44:1-6.

2. It is to be wrought *manifestly* by His own power. (No man gets the credit for the coming of the spring. It comes because it cannot help coming.)

3. It is to be *kept scrupulously* under His own leadership (with what joy I press this point).

4. And it is to be *kept* under the shadow of His own throne from the *marring* power of the Destroyer. See Revelation 12:4, 5.

This Revival will not wane: it will grow and grow. Now here is the climax: It will grow and conquer until it has developed a people ready for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

What that Marriage Supper means to the Church and to the world, God knows. I can only dimly guess, but God knows, and it is coming surely, and soon.

During these past 17 years, God has been graciously bending His ear and stretching out His hand in answer to the Covenant Cry for the rain, and each time the answer comes it enables me to take a closer grip upon the Covenant promises for this great Revival.

"Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons (things promised are most certainly things to come!) and concerning the work of My hands, command ye Me." There is only one form of words in which I can so speak to the Lord our God. They are David's words. "*Do it, Lord, do as Thou hast said.*"

I am glad and grateful that so many of God's people are now "*stirring up themselves to take hold on His strength*" concerning this great Revival.

CLOSING WORDS

What has all this to do with the Presbyterian Church in Canada? May we not say with Paul, "Much every way."

Throughout Christendom, "the enemy has come in like a flood." The Spirit of the Lord has again lifted up the old Presbyterian Standard, Jesus Christ as King on the one side, "The word of the Lord endureth forever," on the other side. Gideon's 32,000 have loyally rallied to that Standard.

But God is afraid of numbers. Man glories in numbers, but God is afraid of them. He may see it necessary, by some test of His own choosing, to reduce us to 10,000. Even these may seem too many in His eye: then some God-given test would certainly further reduce us to a Gideon and his 300.

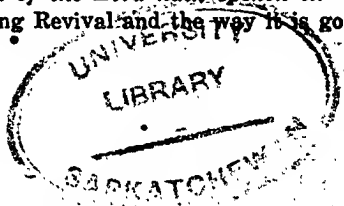
But the Lord of hosts *can* use numbers when they are in the right attitude toward Himself and the foe. He did not send back any of Asa's army. But this was their attitude toward the Lord and the foe.—"Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God, let not man prevail against Thee." The Lord of hosts did not need to diminish that army.

When Jehoshaphat led Judah out against three confederate armies coming down upon them, none of them were sent back. But they were an army provided with musical instruments instead of swords and spears, and instead of war-songs they were singing songs of praise to Him who had undertaken to do the fighting. The Lord could use an army like that *to carry back the spoil*.

But a large army full of pride and *self-confidence* is utterly useless in Christ's campaign. It is to weed that out of His army that the Holy Ghost orders the preaching of Isa. 40:5, 6. "The Voice said, Cry, and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the *goodliness thereof* (the very best to be found in man and his works) is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the goodliness thereof fadeth, *because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it*: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, *"BUT the Word of our God shall stand forever."*

This is the preaching that will take every vestige of pride and self-confidence out of God's chosen army. This and the good news that follows are going to "exalt every valley, and pull down every mountain, make the crooked things among God's people straight, and the rough places smooth, so that the glory of the Lord can be revealed to Zion, and then all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

This is the great coming Revival and the way it is going to be brought about.



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